

DETAILED ACTION

Allowable Subject Matter

1. Claims 1-7, 9, 10 and 12-14 are allowed.
2. The following is an examiner's statement of reasons for allowance: The prior art does not specifically disclose an image processing method comprising: receiving an external trigger from the outside, to initiate image pickup processing of a workpiece; generating a predetermined number of internal triggers at predetermined intervals via an interval timer after receiving the trigger from the outside; picking up workpiece image pickup data by a camera after receipt of each of the external trigger and the internal triggers; performing image processing with respect to each of the workpiece image pickup data picked up by the camera after receipt of the external trigger and internal triggers; and performing statistical processing to calculate variations between the image pickup data picked up by the camera after receipt of the external triggers and the internal triggers, and determining abnormal image pickup data that deviates from a predetermined range and eliminating the abnormal image pickup data from the statistical processing, as disclosed in claim 4. Claim 1 is patentable for similar reasons as claim 4.

Any comments considered necessary by applicant must be submitted no later than the payment of the issue fee and, to avoid processing delays, should preferably accompany the issue fee. Such submissions should be clearly labeled "Comments on Statement of Reasons for Allowance."

Contact Information

Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Allen Wong whose telephone number is (571) 272-7341. The examiner can normally be reached on Mondays to Thursdays from 8am-6pm Flextime.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, John W. Miller can be reached on (571) 272-7353. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 571-273-8300.

Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free). If you would like assistance from a USPTO Customer Service Representative or access to the automated information system, call 800-786-9199 (IN USA OR CANADA) or 571-272-1000.

/Allen Wong/
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